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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Mission in El Salvador

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/50/L.7

Fourth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the financing of the extension of the United Nations Mission in El Salvador (MINUSAL) for the period from 1 November 1995 to 30 April 1996 (A/C.5/50/14).

2. As indicated in paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's statement, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/50/L.7, the requirements for the extension of the mandate of MINUSAL amount to $1,366,200. The Secretary-General proposes to finance MINUSAL from additional provisions under the regular budget for the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 ($452,500 for 1995 and $913,700 for 1996). These provisions would include the costs of 10 Professionals (1 D-2, 1 P-5 and 8 P-4), 1 General Service, 15 local level posts and 4 civilian police.

3. The Committee sought clarification as to the authority for the establishment of MINUSAL. The Committee recalls that the Security Council, in its resolution 961 (1994) of 23 November 1994, extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for one final period

from 1 December 1994 to 30 April 1995 and, in its resolution 991 (1995) of 28 April 1995, the Security Council affirmed that the mandate of ONUSAL had terminated as of 30 April 1995.

4. The Committee was informed that the establishment of MINUSAL by the Secretary-General was in response to the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/137 of 19 December 1994, paragraph 15, "to devise procedures for providing El Salvador, in the context of the peace agreement, with the necessary cooperation and assistance in the period after the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, in order to safeguard peace and the strengthening and consolidation of national reconciliation, democracy and sustainable development". The Committee notes that in this connection the Secretary-General has submitted a report to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly on the situation in Central America (A/50/517).

5. As indicated in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's statement and in paragraph 2 of his report contained in document A/50/517, the Secretary-General, in his letter dated 6 February 1995 (S/1995/143), informed the President of the Security Council of his intention to put in place "a small team of about eight Professionals, with the necessary support staff. This team would have the capability to provide good offices, to verify implementation of the outstanding points on the peace agreements and to provide a continuing flow of accurate and reliable information" so that the Security Council can be kept informed as necessary. The arrangement proposed by the Secretary-General to the Council was welcomed by the Council, as indicated in the letter dated 17 February 1995 from the President of the Council to the Secretary-General (S/1995/144).

6. As stated in paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's statement, MINUSAL began its work on 1 May 1995 upon conclusion of ONUSAL's mandate, effective 30 April 1995. The funding of MINUSAL for the period from 1 May 1995 to 31 October 1995 was authorized by the Secretary-General under the terms of General Assembly resolution 48/229 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses.

7. For the period starting on 1 May 1995 up to 31 October 1995, the MINUSAL team was composed of 11 Professionals, headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the assistant secretary-general level, supported by 8 civilian police, 1 internationally recruited General Service staff and 15 local level staff. The Committee notes from paragraph 26 of document A/50/517 that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General left El Salvador at the end of September 1995. As indicated in paragraph 5 of document A/C.5/50/14, he has been replaced by a representative of the Secretary-General and head of the Mission at the D-2 level. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that, for the six-month period of MINUSAL's activities from 1 May 1995 to 31 October 1995, the Secretary-General has, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/229, authorized expenditures in the amount of $1,028,500. This authorization did not involve submission of a proposal to the Advisory Committee for review. The Committee was informed that trust fund contributions to date to MINUSAL amounted to $318,000, of which $72,090 would be available to cover partially some of the 1995 additional requirements.

8. In paragraph 1 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the proposal to extend MINUSAL for a period of six months, from 1 November 1995 to

30 April 1996, includes a gradual reduction in strength and costs. In addition, in his report contained in document A/50/517, the Secretary-General indicates that, "depending on the rate of progress in the coming months, it should be possible to reduce further the size of the Mission and gradually phase it out" (A/50/517, para. 28).

9. The Committee points out that the timing of these reductions in personnel and costs are not explained in the Secretary-General's statement. The Committee expects that, as implementation of the aspects of the peace agreements is completed, the Secretary-General will review the number and level of the posts and other expenses of the Mission with a view to making appropriate reductions.

10. The Committee was not provided with adequate justification for the posts being requested in relation to the programme of work for the completion of all outstanding areas of the peace accords mentioned in paragraph 3 (i.e., public security, land transfer, human settlements, reinsertion programmes, protection of the wounded and disabled and legislative reform). The Committee recommends that, should the Mission be further extended beyond 30 April 1996, the Secretary-General should provide more detailed justification for the posts requested.

11. With regard to provisions for three international consultants, upon request, the Committee was informed that, since one of the international consultants' place of residence is in El Salvador, the related reductions for travel and subsistence costs amount to $6,700 in 1995 and $10,200 in 1996. The Committee understands that ONUSAL's consultants have been retained for services to MINUSAL. The Committee trusts that, for all consultants, arrangements will be made to provide the requisite expert knowledge to the Mission in the most cost-effective manner. As for the local press consultant, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to ensure that arrangements take into account existing capacity and capabilities within the Department of Public Information, taking also into account the need for specialized knowledge of the area.

12. The Committee notes from the annex to the Secretary-General's statement that provisions for equipment are limited to requirements for operation and maintenance. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that MINUSAL's equipment was obtained from the available stock of ONUSAL. The Committee recalls that it had been informed of the disposal of ONUSAL assets in the report of the Secretary-General of 22 June 1995 (A/49/518/Add.2). The value of ONUSAL assets transferred to MINUSAL in that report was estimated at about $432,200 (A/49/518/Add.2, annex II).

13. The Committee recalls that, as indicated in paragraph 20 of document A/49/518/Add.1, the equipment and property of ONUSAL was disposed of in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994. The Committee expects to revert to the issue of examining the accounting procedures for the transfer of assets among United Nations operations that are financed by different scales of assessment upon receipt of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the subject of the transfer of assets.

14. The Committee notes that, under provisions for miscellaneous services and supplies, production of official reports is estimated at $30,000 ($5,000 per

month) in paragraph 11 of the annex to the Secretary-General's statement. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the total production cost of reports is estimated at $5,000 for the Mission's mandate period ($1,600 for 1995 and $3,400 for 1996) instead of $5,000 per month. Therefore, the provisions for this item should be reduced by $25,000 ($8,400 in 1995 and $16,600 in 1996).

15. With regard to rental and maintenance of premises, the Committee urges the Secretary-General to make every effort to obtain contributions from the host Government whenever feasible.

16. Taking into account the adjustments mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 14 above, the Advisory Committee believes that additional requirements for 1995 should not exceed $367,400. Such additional appropriation as may be necessary for 1994-1995 should be considered in the context of the second performance report for the biennium 1994-1995, which will be considered by the General Assembly during its fiftieth session. For the additional requirements of MINUSAL in 1996, the Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that adoption of draft resolution A/50/L.7 entails an additional requirement of up to $886,900 under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997. Such additional appropriation as may be necessary will be considered by the General Assembly in the context of its approval of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.